U.S. ELECTION ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
1225 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 1100
Washington, DC 20005

Readiness Checklist for November 4, 2008 Federal Elections

The U.S Election Assistance Commission (EAC) is working with State and local election officials to identify and remedy problems to ensure that all votes cast will be recorded and counted accurately and timely. Following is a list of items that can be checked and questions to be asked of local election officials prior to Election Day to assess readiness in your district.

➢ **Potential Problem:** Long lines at the polls that could discourage voter participation.
Likely Cause: Inefficient customer service. Shortage of voting machines, poll workers and ballots. Inefficient check-in procedure. Unresolved or difficult to resolve voter registration issues. First time use of new voting machines. Long ballots. Poll workers with insufficient information to efficiently resolve problems. Delays in arriving at a resolution.

➢ **Potential Problem:** Voting machine malfunctions.
Likely Cause: Human error. First time use of new voting machines. Lack of technical savvy or familiarity among poll workers with set up and operational procedures. Voter hesitancy with a new process.

➢ **Potential Problem:** Voter Confusion and Frustration
Likely Cause: Inability to access official information OR information overload. New laws, procedures, polling place locations. New or infrequent voters who are not familiar with the process. Long ballots. Voter information too technical rather than plain language. Numerous flyers, mailers, robo calls, etc. from many different sources, sometimes providing conflicting information. Poor customer service at the polls.

➢ **Potential Problem:** Unanticipated Catastrophic Event
Likely Cause: Natural Disaster or Mandate
Every State and local jurisdiction should have a written contingency plan to cover every conceivable unanticipated event that could happen on Election Day, including prolonged power outage; building fires or vehicle accidents that destroy ballots and/or equipment; severe weather on Election Day (hurricanes, tornados, snow storms); terrorist type attacks.

Readiness Check List

- ✓ Voter Registration

    ⇒ What type of statewide voter registration data base is in place, as required by the Help America Vote Act (HAVA)? Who maintains the statewide list? What are the matching protocols to determine legitimate duplications?

    ⇒ How do local jurisdictions access this database? How do poll workers access the data base on Election Day?

    ⇒ How can voters find out if they are accurately registered on this list, both before and on Election Day (telephone hotlines, website portals)?

- ✓ Early or Absentee Voting

    ⇒ Is Early or Absentee Voting offered? If so, when and where?

    ⇒ How do voters know if and when they qualify to vote by absentee ballot, especially persons who are disabled, elderly or confined due to illness?

    ⇒ When and where are the early and absentee ballots counted?

- ✓ Polling Places

    ⇒ Locations

    Have all polling place sites been identified? If no, when will the selection process be completed?

    How many new polling places will be used as compared to 2004? How are voters being notified about changes to polling place locations?

    How can voter find out on Election Day where they are to vote?

    ⇒ Staffing/Poll Workers

    Are there sufficient funds to have fully staffed polling places? (How many poll workers are needed to fully staff all polling places in the jurisdiction? What is the plan if the budget will not support full staffing?)

    What is being done to recruit the required number of poll workers? What is the contingency plan if recruitment efforts fall short?

    What is the poll worker training program? How many hours of training total will each poll worker receive? What types of manuals, handbooks, etc. do the poll workers have access to? Ask to see the materials.

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⇒ Accessibility for Disabled and Elderly

Are all polling places accessible as required by federal law? If no, what alternative provisions are being made for accessibility?

⇒ Length of Time to Wait to Vote

What is a reasonable length of time that voters should expect to wait in line to vote during "peak" hours for voting? If the wait turns out to be longer than that, what is the process to identify and remedy the problem?

✓ Voting Systems

⇒ Voter Familiarity

In anticipation of high numbers of new voters, what is being done to provide pre-election voter education on the voting machine(s) to be used in the jurisdiction?

⇒ Pre-election Testing

What tests will be performed prior to Election Day for logic and accuracy? When and where? How is the public notified? (Have someone attend to observe the Logic and Accuracy Testing.)

⇒ Chain of Custody

How are the voting systems secured before and on Election Day? (Have someone visit the warehouse and receive a walk through of the chain of custody.) Does the jurisdiction send voting equipment home with poll workers the night or weekend before Election Day? If yes, what are the security protocols?

⇒ Contingency for Equipment Malfunctions

If a system malfunctions, what is the course of action to diagnose and correct the problem? Who makes that decision?

Will back up systems be deployed to polling sites if there are system malfunctions? Who makes this decision? How long will it take for a back up system to be operational at the polling site?

✓ Ballots

⇒ Was an assessment done to identify potential ballot design problems from previous elections? If yes, what has been done to rectify the issue?

⇒ Who designs the ballot?

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⇒ What is the formula to determine how many paper ballots (or rolls of paper and ink cartridges for VVPAT) will be assigned to each polling location?

⇒ What is the chain of custody for ballots before and during Election Day?

✓ Provisional Ballots

⇒ What is the procedure for issuing and counting provisional ballots? What determines when and how this procedure is used? Is it determined by the State or the local jurisdiction?

⇒ How does the voter find out if his/her provisional ballot was counted? If a provisional ballot is not counted, is there an appeal process?

✓ Voter Education and Information

⇒ How will voters receive information before Election Day about polling places, voter identification requirements, sample ballots, etc.? What voter education programs will be conducted? When? Where?

⇒ How will voters be able to tell the difference between official government information and that distributed by other groups?

✓ Contingency Plans

⇒ Ask about the decision making chain of command with respect to unanticipated events on Election Day. Is there a written plan? Is it available for public review (those sections that do not compromise security of the polling place, voting systems and ballots)? How will the public be informed? What process will be followed if there is a severe Election Day disaster – i.e. Category 4 or 5 Hurricane or major earthquake the night before or on Election Day? Who has jurisdiction to determine what happens if a major population area – significant number of voters – cannot participate on Election Day November 4?

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EAC PUBLICATIONS (available in hard copies and electronically at www.eac.gov)

I. Election Management Guidelines Program

Quick Start Management Guide brochures:

☐ New voting systems
☐ Ballot preparation/printing and pre-election testing
☐ Voting system security
☐ Poll workers
☐ Voting system certification
☐ Contingency and disaster planning
☐ Managing change in an election office
☐ Polling places and vote centers
☐ Acceptance testing
☐ Absentee voting and vote by mail
☐ Media and public relations
☐ Developing an audit trail
☐ Uniformed and overseas citizens
☐ Central count optical scan ballots

Election Management Guidelines Chapters

☐ Voting system certification
☐ System security
☐ Physical security
☐ Absentee voting/vote by mail*
☐ Acceptance testing*
☐ Ballot building*
☐ Contingency planning and change management*
☐ Polling place and vote center management*
☐ Uniformed and overseas citizens*
☐ Developing an audit trail*
☐ Pre-election and parallel testing*

*These are currently available on the EAC's Web site only, www.eac.gov. Hard copies will be available soon.

II. Language Accessibility Program

☐ Spanish Glossary of Key Election Terminology
☐ Chinese Glossary of Key Election Terminology
☐ Japanese Glossary of Key Election Terminology
☐ Korean Glossary of Key Election Terminology
☐ Tagalog Glossary of Key Election Terminology
☐ Vietnamese Glossary of Key Election Terminology

III. EAC Research (http://www.eac.gov/program-areas/research-resources-and-reports)

☐ Successful Practices for Poll Worker Recruitment, Training, and Retention
☐ A Guidebook for Recruiting College Poll Workers
☐ Poll Worker Requirements by State
☐ Effective Designs for the Administration of Federal Elections

EAC WEB RESOURCES

Voter Information Center
http://www.eac.gov/voter

EAC Completed Research and Reports
http://www.eac.gov/program-areas/research-resources-and-reports/completed-research-and-reports

Best Practices for Provisional Voting and Related research
http://www.eac.gov/election/docs/provisionalvoting-october2006.pdf/attachment_download/file
http://www.eac.gov/Freedom%20of%20Information%20Act/reading-room

Best Practices Report on Voting by Uniformed and Overseas Citizens
http://www.eac.gov/election/practices/uaoc

Best Practices in Election Administration Tool Kit
http://www.eac.gov/election/practices/bpea/bp-welcome

Election Management Guidelines
http://www.eac.gov/election/quick-start-management-guides

Language Accessibility Program
http://www.eac.gov/voter/language-accessibility-program-1

Resources for Overseas Citizens and Military Voters
http://www.eac.gov/voter/overseas-citizens-and-military-voters

Becoming a Poll Worker
http://www.eac.gov/voter/poll%20workers

HAVA College Poll Worker Program
http://www.eac.gov/voter/hava-college-poll-worker-program

State Complaint Procedures
http://www.eac.gov/voter/state-complaint-procedures

Election Directory for Cancellation Notices
http://www.eac.gov/election/cancellation

EAC Advisories and Guidance
http://www.eac.gov/election/advisories%20and%20guidance

For additional information or to request copies of these publications, please contact the EAC at (202) 566-3100 or toll free at 1-866-747-1471, or via email at HAVAinfo@eac.gov.